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United Nations

Commission on the Status of Women

Report on the fifty-sixth session (14 March 2011, 27 February-9 March and 15 March 2012)

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Note

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision recommended to the Council for adoption by the General Assembly

1. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the approval of the following draft decision for adoption by the General Assembly:

Ending female genital mutilation*

The General Assembly, recalling its resolutions 56/128 of 19 December 2001, 58/156 of 22 December 2003 and 60/141 of 16 December 2005, Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 51/2 of 9 March 2007, 52/2 of 7 March 2008 and 54/7 of 12 March 2010, as well as agreed conclusions of the Commission, and all other relevant resolutions, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General[1] on ending female genital mutilation and the recommendations contained therein, decides to consider the issue of ending female genital mutilation at its sixty-seventh session under the agenda item entitled "Advancement of women".

B. Draft resolution for adoption by the Council

2. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women**

The Economic and Social Council,

Having considered with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General,[2]

Recalling the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[3] in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women[4] and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[5]

Recalling also its resolution 2011/18 of 26 July 2011 and other relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 57/337 of 3 July 2003,

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* For the discussion, see chap. II, paras. 63-66.

** For the discussion, see chap. II, paras. 67-72.

[1] E/CN.6/2012/8.

[2] E/CN.6/2012/6.

[3] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[4] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[5] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

on the prevention of armed conflict, and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, on women and peace and security,

Recalling further the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women[6] as it concerns the protection of civilian populations,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[7] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[7] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[8] and reaffirming that these human rights instruments must be respected in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern about the grave situation of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, resulting from the severe impact of the ongoing illegal Israeli occupation and all of its manifestations,

Expressing grave concern about the increased difficulties being faced by Palestinian women and girls living under Israeli occupation, including the continuation of home demolitions, evictions of Palestinians, the revocation of residency rights and arbitrary detention and imprisonment, as well as high rates of poverty and unemployment, food insecurity, inadequate water supply, incidents of domestic violence, and declining health, education and living standards, including the rising incidence of trauma and decline in their psychological well-being, and expressing grave concern about the dire humanitarian crisis and insecurity and instability on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the Gaza Strip,

Deploring the dire economic and social conditions of Palestinian women and girls in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the systematic violation of their human rights resulting from the severe impact of ongoing illegal Israeli practices, including displacement and the confiscation of land, particularly in connection with the construction and expansion of settlements and the Wall, which continue to constitute a major obstacle to peace on the basis of the two-State solution, and the continued imposition of closures and restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, which have detrimentally affected their right to health care, including access for pregnant women to health services for antenatal care and safe delivery, education, employment, development and freedom of movement,

Gravely concerned, in particular, about the critical socio-economic and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, including that resulting from the Israeli military operations and the imposition of a blockade consisting of the prolonged closure of border crossings and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, as well as the continued impeding of the reconstruction process by Israel, the occupying Power, which has detrimentally affected every aspect of the lives of the civilian population, especially women and children, in the Gaza Strip,

Stressing the importance of providing assistance, especially emergency assistance, to alleviate the dire socio-economic and humanitarian situation being faced by Palestinian women and their families,

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[6] See General Assembly resolution 48/104.

[7] See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

Emphasizing the importance of increasing the role of women in peacebuilding and decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflicts as part of efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of all women in the region, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and involvement in all efforts for the achievement, maintenance and promotion of peace and security,

1. *Reaffirms* that the Israeli occupation remains the major obstacle for Palestinian women with regard to their advancement, self-reliance and integration in the development of their society, and stresses the importance of efforts to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and to ensure their equal participation and involvement in all efforts for the achievement, maintenance and promotion of peace and security;

2. *Calls upon* the international community, in this regard, to continue to provide urgently needed assistance, especially emergency assistance, and services in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by Palestinian women and their families and to help in the reconstruction of relevant Palestinian institutions, with the integration of a gender perspective into all of its international assistance programmes, and commends the implementation of the Palestinian Authority's plan of August 2009 for constructing the institutions of an independent Palestinian State within a twenty-four-month period and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by international institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations;

3. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply fully with the provisions and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[9] the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 1907,[10] the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,[11] and all other relevant rules, principles and instruments of international law, including the International Covenants on Human Rights, in order to protect the rights of Palestinian women and their families;

4. *Urges* the international community to continue to give special attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of Palestinian women and girls and to intensify its measures to improve the difficult conditions being faced by Palestinian women and their families living under Israeli occupation;

5. *Calls upon* Israel to facilitate the return of all refugees and displaced Palestinian women and children to their homes and properties, in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

6. *Stresses* the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in resuming, advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-

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[9] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[10] See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Palestinian conflict[12] and the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session;[13]

7. *Requests* the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to monitor and take action with regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[3] in particular paragraph 260 concerning Palestinian women and children, the Beijing Platform for Action[4] and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century";[5]

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation, to assist Palestinian women by all available means, including those laid out in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women,[2] and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session a report, including information provided by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

C. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

3. The Commission on the Status of Women recommends to the Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-sixth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission*

The Economic and Social Council takes note of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its fifty-sixth session[14] and approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission set out below:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

   Documentation

   Annotated provisional agenda and proposed organization of work of the Commission on the Status of Women

3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century":

   (a) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives:

      (i) Priority theme: elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls;

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* For the discussion, see chaps. V and VI.

[12] S/2003/529, annex.

[13] A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

[14] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2012, Supplement No. 7* (E/2012/27).

(ii) Review theme: the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls

Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Note by the Secretariat containing a discussion guide for the high-level round table on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls

Report of the Secretary-General on proposals for priority themes for future sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/15, para. 3)

(b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

(c) Gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on the priority theme

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of, and assistance to, Palestinian women

Report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the outcome of the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

4. Communications concerning the status of women.

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the list of confidential communications concerning the status of women and responses thereto

5. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.

Documentation

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women

6. Provisional agenda for the fifty-eighth session of the Commission.

7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-seventh session.

D. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

4. The following resolutions and decisions adopted by the Commission are brought to the attention of the Council:

Resolution 56/1
Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Guided by the purposes, principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations,

Guided also by the principles and norms of international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[15] and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977,[16] as well as relevant international standards of human rights, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[9] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[7] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[7] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[17] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[18] the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment[19] and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted on 25 June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights,[20]

Taking duly into account the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/177 of 20 December 2006,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, as well as all resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights concerning hostage-taking and General Assembly resolution 61/172 of 19 December 2006,

Recognizing that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person and that the taking of hostages is an offence of grave concern to the international community,

Recalling the relevant provisions contained in the instruments of international humanitarian law relative to the protection of the civilian population as such,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[21] as well as the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[5] and the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on

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[15] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.
[16] Ibid., vol. 1125, Nos. 17512 and 17513.
[17] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.
[18] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.
[19] Ibid., vol. 1465, No. 24841.
[20] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.
[21] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

children, entitled "A world fit for children",[22] including the provisions therein regarding violence against women and children, and welcoming the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and General Assembly decision 64/530 on the commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 57/337 of 3 July 2003 on the prevention of armed conflict, and Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, 1820 (2008) of 19 June 2008, 1888 (2009) of 30 September 2009, 1889 (2009) of 5 October 2009 and 1960 (2010) of 16 December 2010 on women, peace and security, as well as its resolutions 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, 1379 (2001) of 20 November 2001, 1460 (2003) of 30 January 2003, 1539 (2004) of 22 April 2004, 1612 (2005) of 26 July 2005, 1882 (2009) of 4 August 2009 and 1998 (2011) of 12 July 2011 on children and armed conflict,

Expressing grave concern at the continuation of armed conflicts in many regions throughout the world and the human suffering and humanitarian emergencies they cause,

Noting that women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, whether international or non-international, are victims of serious violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, that continue to have a negative impact on efforts to put an end to those conflicts and cause suffering to the families of those women and children, and stressing, in this regard, the need to address the issue from a humanitarian perspective, among others,

Emphasizing that all forms of violence in areas of armed conflict committed against the civilian population as such, including taking women and children hostage, seriously contravene international humanitarian law, in particular as set out in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,

Being cognizant that States that are parties to an armed conflict have a responsibility not to take hostage and subsequently imprison women and children in armed conflict and to ensure accountability as regards implementation of relevant mechanisms, policies and laws in order to protect them, bearing in mind that all parties to the conflict must refrain from hostage-taking,

Concerned that, despite the efforts of the international community, acts of hostage-taking in different forms and manifestations, inter alia, those committed by terrorists and armed groups, continue to take place and have even increased in many regions of the world,

Recognizing that hostage-taking calls for resolute, firm and concerted efforts on the part of the international community, in conformity with international humanitarian law and in accordance with international human rights standards, in order to bring such abhorrent practices to an end,

Expressing its strong belief that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflict will promote the implementation of the noble goals enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform

[22] General Assembly resolution S-27/2, annex.

for Action, as well as the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on children, entitled "A world fit for children", including the provisions therein regarding violence against women and children,

1. *Reaffirms* that hostage-taking, wherever and by whomever committed, is an illegal act aimed at the destruction of human rights and is, under any circumstances, unjustifiable;

2. *Condemns* all violent acts committed against the civilian population as such, in violation of international humanitarian law in situations of armed conflict, and calls for an effective response to such acts, in particular the immediate release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, including by strengthening international cooperation in this field;

3. *Also condemns* the consequences of hostage-taking, in particular torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, murder, rape, slavery and trafficking in women and children;

4. *Urges* States that are parties to an armed conflict to take all necessary measures, in a timely manner, to determine the identity, fate and whereabouts of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, and, to the greatest possible extent, to provide their family members, through appropriate channels, with all relevant information they have on their fate and whereabouts;

5. *Invites*, in this regard, States to adopt a comprehensive approach, including all appropriate legal and practical measures and coordination mechanisms;

6. *Recognizes* the need for the collection, protection and management of information on women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, according to international and national legal norms and standards, and urges States to cooperate with each other and with other appropriate actors working in this area, inter alia, by providing all relevant and appropriate information;

7. *Strongly urges* all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law and to take all necessary measures for the protection of the civilian population as such, including measures to prevent and combat acts of hostage-taking;

8. *Urges* all parties to armed conflicts to provide safe, unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance for those women and children, in accordance with international humanitarian law;

9. *Also urges* all parties to an armed conflict to cooperate fully with the International Committee of the Red Cross in establishing the fate and whereabouts of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned;

10. *Stresses* both the need to put an end to impunity and the responsibility of all States to prosecute or bring to justice in accordance with international law those responsible for war crimes, including hostage-taking;

11. *Also stresses* the need for addressing the issue of the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts, also as a part of peace processes, with reference to all justice and rule of

law mechanisms, on the basis of transparency, accountability and public involvement and participation;

12. *Emphasizes* the importance of objective, responsible and impartial information, including improved analysis and dissemination of sex- and age-disaggregated data, on hostages, verifiable by relevant international organizations, in facilitating their release, and calls for assistance to those organizations in this regard;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure, in the context of the present resolution, the widest possible dissemination of relevant material, in particular material relating to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), within existing resources;

14. *Also requests* the Secretary-General and all relevant international organizations to use their capabilities and undertake efforts to facilitate the immediate release of civilian women and children who have been taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned;

15. *Invites* the special rapporteurs, within their respective mandates, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, to continue to address the issue of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts and its consequences;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including relevant practical recommendations, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations;

17. *Decides* to consider the question at its fifty-eighth session.

Resolution 56/2
Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Bearing in mind that natural disasters affect human lives and living conditions thereafter, and often have a more direct and adverse impact on women, as well as vulnerable people within groups such as children, older persons and persons with disabilities, and that natural disasters often have different impacts on men and women in regard to the associated risks and vulnerabilities, due to gender inequality, gender stereotypes and discrimination against women, including the lack of equal access to adequate information and economic opportunities, poverty and social exclusion, safety and different family responsibilities,

Reaffirming the commitments regarding women and girls affected by natural disasters in the Beijing Platform for Action[4] and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[5] and reaffirming also that the outcomes stressed the need to incorporate a gender perspective into disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery strategies,

Recalling the agreed conclusions of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women of 15 March 2002,[23] Commission on the Status of Women resolution 49/5 of 11 March 2005, as well as Commission resolution 55/1 of 4 March 2011 entitled "Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies", the Hyogo Declaration[24] and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[25] adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which was held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, as well as all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, including its resolutions 66/9 of 11 November 2011 and 66/120 of 15 December 2011,

Welcoming the response of the affected countries as well as the support and assistance given by the international community in the relief and recovery efforts for natural disasters in all parts of the world, including the devastating earthquake that struck eastern Japan on 11 March 2011, and other recent natural disasters, including those addressed in recent humanitarian appeals, while stressing the importance of further efforts in these responses, including in gender-responsive disaster management,

Stressing the importance of taking equally into account the specific needs of women and vulnerable people within groups such as children, older persons and persons with disabilities in every phase of disaster risk reduction, response and recovery, ensuring equal opportunities for their participation in these processes, calling for a people-centred, holistic approach, in order to build an inclusive society, supported by a social bond among people through community-based approaches, which promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women, strengthens the resilience of communities and reduces social vulnerabilities to disasters,

1. *Recognizes* that women play a vital role in disaster risk reduction (prevention, mitigation and preparedness), response and recovery, including rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the need to enhance women's capacities to respond to disasters, in order, inter alia, to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women;

2. *Urges* Governments and, where appropriate, United Nations entities, civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and other stakeholders to:

(a) Review national policies, strategies and plans and take action to integrate a gender perspective into policies, planning and funding for disaster risk reduction, response and recovery, considering the different impacts that natural disasters have on women and men;

(b) Ensure equal opportunities for the participation of women in decision-making, including with regard to the allocation of resources at all levels regarding disaster risk reduction, response and recovery;

(c) Strengthen the capacities of relevant authorities and institutions at all levels to apply a gender-sensitive approach to disaster risk reduction (prevention,

[23] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 7* (E/2002/27), chap. I, sect. A.

[24] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. 1, resolution 1.

[25] Ibid., resolution 2.

mitigation and preparedness), response and recovery, while raising their awareness, and promote cooperation among them;

(d) Ensure the full enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights in every phase of disaster risk reduction (prevention, mitigation and preparedness), response and recovery;

(e) Make the utmost effort to secure equal access for women and men to disaster relief assistance and provide disaster response and support for recovery that is fully responsive to the needs and views of women and their enjoyment of all human rights, with special attention paid to the needs of pregnant and lactating women, families with infants, single-headed households and widows, such as in the context of the provision of food and supplies, water and sanitation, the set-up and management of shelter, safety and security, and the provision of physical, psychological and emergency health care, including for sexual and reproductive health, and counselling services, while encouraging the involvement of female professionals and gender-balance among field workers;

(f) Ensure that in post-disaster environments special attention is given to sexual and gender-based violence and to the prevention of various forms of exploitation, including the risk of trafficking and the particular vulnerability of girls, unaccompanied children and orphans;

(g) Also ensure, in post-disaster environments, protection and care of and support to the victims of violence and, as appropriate, the provision of legal and other relevant services for victims of violence to aid, inter alia, in the investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence, taking into account women's needs in order to avoid the revictimization of women;

(h) Design, implement and evaluate gender-sensitive economic relief and recovery projects, including vocational and technical skills training measures, in order to help ensure equal economic opportunities between men and women, paying attention to eliminating obstacles to women's rapid integration or reintegration into the formal employment sector, owing to their role in the social and economic process, and taking into account the rural and urban migration that natural disasters may provoke;

(i) Promote income-generating activities and employment opportunities for women affected by natural disasters, particularly rural women, including through supporting community-based businesses, the establishment of necessary social services and access to market, credit and other financial services;

(j) Ensure women and men's equal access to natural-hazard early warning systems and promote disaster risk reduction planning, taking into account the specific needs, views and all human rights of women and men, and raise public awareness and provide training at all levels on gender-sensitive approaches to disaster risk reduction, including in the areas of science and technology;

(k) Ensure women and girls' equal access to and use of information, training and formal and non-formal education on disaster risk reduction, in order for women and girls to fully use these resources;

(l) Systematically collect demographic and socio-economic data and information disaggregated by sex, age and disability and continue to develop gender indicators and analyse gender differences, including through gender-sensitive needs

assessment and planning processes, and integrate this information into disaster risk reduction and management policies and programmes;

(m) Document and assess disaster responses from a gender perspective, and widely disseminate, both nationally, regionally and internationally, information on good practices, lessons learned and tools, including technologies in support of disaster risk reduction, in order to promote and ensure their integration into disaster risk reduction planning;

(n) Recognize and further promote the role of civil society, including community-based organizations, women's organizations and volunteers, in disaster management and in promoting the building of an inclusive, disaster-resilient society that ensures women's full participation;

(o) Recognize also the important role played by female professionals and volunteers, inter alia, in meeting women's needs and further encourage their participation in disaster risk reduction, including prevention, mitigation and preparedness, response and recovery;

(p) Forge constructive partnerships among all stakeholders, including Governments, United Nations entities and other relevant actors, such as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in order to strengthen a gender perspective in all aspects of disaster risk reduction, response and recovery;

3. *Encourages* Governments, local authorities, the United Nations system and regional organizations, and invites donors and other assisting countries to address the vulnerabilities and capacities of women and girls through gender-responsive programming and the allocation of resources in their disaster risk reduction, response and recovery efforts in coordination with the Governments of affected countries;

4. *Requests* all relevant United Nations entities, according to their mandate, to ensure that a gender perspective continues to be mainstreamed into all aspects of disaster risk reduction, response and recovery;

5. *Requests* the United Nations system, Member States and other stakeholders to continue to promote the inclusion of a gender perspective in their activities on disaster risk reduction, including at the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution, including suggestions on how to further address the issue on gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters within the existing United Nations framework.

Resolution 56/3
Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[21] the Programme of Action of the International

Conference on Population and Development ("Cairo Programme of Action"),[26] adopted in 1994, and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[27] adopted in 1995, the outcomes of their review conferences and commitments regarding the reduction of maternal, newborn and child mortality and universal access to reproductive health, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[28] and the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[29] reaffirming its resolution 54/5 of 12 March 2010 and recalling other relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Human Rights Council resolutions 11/8 of 17 June 2009,[30] 15/17 of 30 September 2010[31] and 18/2 of 28 September 2011,[32]

Reaffirming also the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular Millennium Development Goal 5 on improving maternal health, including the targets to reduce by three quarters between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio and to achieve by 2015 universal access to reproductive health, Millennium Development Goal 4 on reducing child mortality, Millennium Development Goal 3 on promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, and Millennium Development Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and noting with concern that Millennium Development Goal 5 is the least likely of all the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[9] and the obligations of States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[7] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[7] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[17] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[18] the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[33] the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination[34] and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,[35]

Recalling also the outcomes of relevant high-level meetings and conferences, including the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals at its sixty-fifth session, of 22 September 2010,[36] the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, of 10 June 2011[37] and the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, of 19 September 2011,[38]

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[26] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[27] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[28] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[29] See General Assembly resolution 60/1.

[30] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/64/53), chap. III, sect. A.

[31] Ibid., *Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/65/53/Add.1), chap. II.

[32] Ibid., *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/66/53/Add.1 and Corr.1), chap. II.

[33] General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.

[34] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

[35] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2220, No. 39481.

[36] General Assembly resolution 65/1.

[37] See General Assembly resolution 65/277.

[38] See General Assembly resolution 66/2.

Recognizing the need to continue to raise awareness at the national, regional and international levels in order to stimulate greater efforts to reduce unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity,

Recognizing also the role of the United Nations system, including its funds, programmes and agencies, in particular the leading roles of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, in eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and the work under the annual World Health Assembly agenda item on monitoring the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals, and welcoming the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and other United Nations entities to promote gender equality, empowerment of women, development, human rights and peace through, inter alia, the mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective in United Nations activities,

Welcoming the ongoing partnerships between a variety of stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global levels aimed at addressing the multifaceted determinants of global health and the commitments and initiatives to accelerate progress on the health-related Millennium Development Goals, including those announced at the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals held at United Nations Headquarters on 25 September 2008, and at the corresponding follow-up high-level event held on 23 September 2009,

Acknowledging the decline of preventable maternal mortality in almost all regions, but noting with great concern the wide disparity among and within countries, with sub-Saharan Africa experiencing well above twice the global average level of maternal mortality, and that maternal mortality is generally highest in rural areas and in poorer and less-educated communities, including in informal urban settlements,

Expressing deep concern that more than 350,000 women and adolescent girls still die every year from largely preventable complications related to pregnancy or childbirth, that adolescent girls face a higher risk of complications and death and that the average annual percentage decline in the global maternal mortality ratio still falls short of the figure of 5.5 per cent required to achieve the first target of Millennium Development Goal 5,

Taking note that, as reported by the World Health Organization,[39] the causes of maternal death include severe bleeding (haemorrhage), infection, high blood pressure in pregnancy (eclampsia), unsafe abortion, obstructed labour and other direct causes, as well as other indirect causes, including malaria, undernutrition, anaemia, chronic non-communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS,

Expressing concern that each year approximately 15 million to 20 million women of childbearing age worldwide, including adolescent girls, suffer from often preventable maternal morbidity, disabilities, injuries and illnesses connected with pregnancy and childbirth, including as a result of early pregnancy, early childbearing and other high-risk conditions, such as uterine prolapse, obstetric fistulas, stress incontinence, hypertension, haemorrhoids, perineal tears, urinary tract infections and severe anaemia, and that, as a result of these conditions, women suffer serious

[39] World Health Organization, *The World Health Report 2005: Make Every Mother and Child Count* (Geneva, 2005).

physical, economic, psychological and social consequences that affect their well-being,

Recognizing that the root causes of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity, which can constrain efforts to eliminate them and contribute to their unacceptably high global rates, encompass a wide range of interlinked underlying factors related to development, human rights and health, including, inter alia, poverty, illiteracy, lack of economic opportunities, challenges associated with rapid population growth, poor nutrition, barriers to education, discrimination against women and girls, harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and early and forced marriage, as well as gender-based violence, lack of participation in decision-making, poor health infrastructure, inadequate training for health personnel and inadequate investment in education, nutrition and basic health care,

Recognizing also that most instances of maternal mortality and morbidity are preventable and that preventable maternal mortality and morbidity is a health, development and human rights challenge that also requires the effective promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls, in particular their rights to life, to be equal in dignity, to education, to be free to seek, receive and impart information, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress, to freedom from discrimination and to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health,

Noting that a human rights-based approach to eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity is underpinned by the principles of, inter alia, accountability, participation, transparency, empowerment, sustainability, non-discrimination and international cooperation,

Expressing concern that more than 215 million women who want to avoid pregnancy or control the spacing of their pregnancies are not using an effective method of contraception, despite increases in use in recent years, and noting that meeting the unmet need for family planning with safe, effective and affordable methods of modern contraception would avert nearly 100,000 maternal deaths each year,

Deeply concerned that early marriage leads to early pregnancy and early childbearing, which presents a much higher risk of complications during pregnancy and delivery leading to maternal mortality and morbidity, increases the risk of disability, stillbirth and maternal death, exposes young married girls to a greater risk of domestic violence, as well as HIV and sexually transmitted infections, reduces their opportunities to complete their education, gain comprehensive knowledge and participate in the community or develop employable skills, and violates or impairs the full enjoyment of all their human rights, and recognizing with concern that limited access to the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health, causes high levels of obstetric fistula and other maternal morbidities, as well as maternal mortality,

Expressing deep concern that HIV infection significantly increases the risk of maternal mortality and morbidity, so that, in countries with high HIV prevalence, AIDS-related complications are one of the leading causes of maternal mortality, and that nearly half of the pregnant women living with HIV do not have access to critical services, including antiretroviral therapy and, in particular, sexual and

reproductive health-care services, including family planning, access to contraception methods and HIV prevention,

Noting with concern that maternal and child health is inextricably linked to the risk of non-communicable diseases and associated risk factors, specifically given that prenatal malnutrition and low birth weight create a predisposition to obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes later in life and that conditions such as maternal obesity and gestational diabetes are also associated with an increased risk of contracting non-communicable diseases,

Acknowledging that cervical cancer kills around 250,000 women each year, many of childbearing age, and that the vast majority of the deaths and suffering could be averted with highly effective and low-cost screen and treat approaches and through vaccination against the human papilloma virus,

Acknowledging also that failure to prevent maternal mortality and morbidity is among the most significant barriers to the empowerment of women and girls in all aspects of life, the full enjoyment of their human rights and their ability to reach their full potential,

Recognizing that in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, women's reproductive health is subject to particular risks and that sexual violence and rape often contribute to exceptionally high levels of maternal morbidity and mortality,

Noting that health services are needed to protect and enhance the well-being of both rural and urban populations affected and displaced by crises and conflicts and to reduce and prevent maternal mortality and morbidity, including by providing family planning and caring for those who are victims of all forms of violence,

Emphasizing the role of education and health literacy in improving health outcomes over a lifetime, and expressing concern about the high dropout rate, especially of girls in secondary education,

Recognizing the need to ensure women's and girls' right to education at all levels, as well as sex education based on full and accurate information in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of girls and boys, and with appropriate direction and guidance,

Reaffirming its commitment to the equal participation of women and men in public and political life as a key element in women's and men's equal participation in eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity as well as in decision-making when defining policies and strategies in that regard,

Reaffirming also that gender equality, the empowerment of women and the elimination of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity cannot be achieved without promoting and protecting the right of women to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and reaffirming that expanding access to sexual and reproductive health information and health services is essential for achieving the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals and is crucial for achieving gender equality, the empowerment of women and the full enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing the need for greater coordination and commitment to improving access to health services for women and children through a primary health-care

approach and the provision of proven and well-known evidence-based interventions and to reducing maternal, newborn and child mortality and morbidity, including through a continuum of services, including family planning, prenatal care, skilled birth attendance, emergency obstetric care and post-partum care, including for those living in poverty and in underserved rural areas,

Noting the negative health effects of early pregnancy and early childbearing, acknowledging the direct health benefit of school attendance for young girls, in the light of the link between years of school attendance and delay in childbirth, including evidence that each additional year of schooling delays the age at which a girl has her first child by approximately six to ten months and that each year of schooling reduces by 14 per cent the likelihood of a girl under 18 having a child, to 23 per cent,

Emphasizing the commitment to provide universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and the need to integrate family planning, sexual health and health-care services in national strategies and programmes, and to ensure that all women, men and young people have information about, access to and a choice of the widest possible range of family planning options, including safe, effective, affordable and acceptable modern methods of contraception,

Emphasizing also the importance of strengthening affordable and sustainable health systems that deliver equitable health outcomes, including by improving basic infrastructure and human and technical resources,

Expressing concern about the slow pace of progress in improving maternal, newborn and child health and the inadequate resources for their health, and noting the continuing inequalities among and within Member States, the lack of appreciation of the impact of maternal, newborn and child health on sustainable socio-economic development and the continuing need to address gender inequalities,

Stressing the importance of strengthening health systems to better respond to women's health needs in terms of access, comprehensiveness and quality, and underlining the need to address women's health through comprehensive strategies targeting root causes of gender inequality in health care, including unequal and limited access to health-care services,

Stressing also that with accelerated progress towards Millennium Development Goal 5, it could become possible to envisage, in the not too distant future, a world where preventable maternal mortality has been eliminated,

1. *Calls upon* Member States and the international community to strongly commit at all levels to the elimination of the persistent and unacceptably high global rate of maternal mortality and morbidity;

2. *Urges* government authorities and other leaders at the international, regional, national and local levels to generate the political will, increased resources, commitment, international cooperation and technical assistance urgently required to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity and improve maternal and newborn health;

3. *Calls upon* Member States to fully and effectively implement the Beijing Platform for Action,[4] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development ("Cairo Programme of Action")[26] and the outcomes of their review conferences, including the commitments relating to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and the promotion and protection of all

human rights in this context, and to maximize their efforts to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity by strengthening comprehensive health-care services for women and girls, including access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and information as agreed to in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Cairo Programme of Action;

4. *Also calls upon* Member States to address gender inequalities, poverty, violations of the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls, including during childbirth, discrimination against women and girls, including that caused by negative attitudes and gender stereotypes, and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting, that contribute to the unacceptably high and persistent global rate of maternal mortality and morbidity, bearing in mind the impact of multiple forms of discrimination; to guarantee to all women access to the highest attainable standard of health; and to ensure women's full participation in decision-making at the local, national and international levels regarding health care;

5. *Encourages* Member States to develop comprehensive strategies to target gender inequality in health care and put into practice policies to ensure women's equitable access to affordable and adequate health services, including primary health care and basic nutrition;

6. *Calls upon* Governments to recognize the right of women migrants, regardless of their immigration status, to have access to emergency health care, and in this regard to ensure that women migrants are not discriminated against on the grounds of pregnancy and childbirth, and in accordance with national legislation to address the vulnerabilities to HIV experienced by migrant populations and support their access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support;

7. *Urges* Member States to build on effective, multisectoral and integrated approaches and to take action at all levels to address the interlinked root causes of maternal mortality and morbidity, such as, inter alia, poverty, poor nutrition, early marriage, barriers to education, the lack of accessible and appropriate health-care services, information and education, and gender inequality, and to pay particular attention to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls and to promoting women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

8. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure the right of women and girls to education of good quality and on an equal basis with men and boys, to ensure that they complete a full course of primary education, and to renew their efforts to improve and expand girls' and women's education at all levels, including at the secondary and higher levels, as well as vocational education and technical training, in order to, inter alia, achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and poverty eradication;

9. *Emphasizes* the significance of maternity, motherhood and the role of parents in the family and in the upbringing of children and that the upbringing of children requires the shared responsibility of parents, legal guardians, women and men, and society as a whole, and recognizes the need for age-appropriate, evidence-based and comprehensive sex education in order to help prepare young people to deal positively and responsibly with their sexuality and to navigate issues such as marriage, childbearing, sexually transmitted infections and HIV, and complications of pregnancy and childbirth, in particular the high risk connected to early sexual

relations, early pregnancy and early childbearing, as well as the need to improve the referral and access of adolescents to quality, comprehensive, integrated, accessible and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning;

10. *Stresses with deep concern* that early pregnancy, early childbearing and limited access to quality, comprehensive, integrated and accessible sexual and reproductive health-care services, including in the area of skilled birth attendance, emergency obstetric care and the management of complications arising from abortion, causes high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity, including a high prevalence of obstetric fistula, and furthermore entails complications during pregnancy and childbirth, which often lead to death, particularly for young women and girls;

11. *Urges* Member States and the international community to strengthen the advocacy, policy and programmatic links between HIV and primary health care, sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health and overall health systems, including by integrating services and eliminating parallel systems for HIV-related services and information, where feasible;

12. *Welcomes* the commitment to working towards the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2015 and substantially reducing AIDS-related maternal deaths, and urges Member States to ensure that women and girls of childbearing age have access to HIV prevention services and that pregnant women have access to antenatal care, information, HIV counselling and other HIV-related services, and to increase the availability of and access to effective prevention and treatment for women living with HIV and their infants, and in this regard welcomes the contribution of the Global Plan towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections among Children by 2015 and Keeping Their Mothers Alive;

13. *Urges* Member States and the United Nations system to take steps to implement the recommendations of the World Health Organization for intermittent preventive treatment for all pregnant women at risk of severe malarial infection in high-prevalence malaria areas in sub-Saharan African countries, and strongly encourages Member States to support efforts to increase the use of insecticidal bednets by all family members, including those most vulnerable to malaria, such as pregnant women;

14. *Urges* Member States, with the help of the United Nations system and the international community where needed, to strengthen health systems for women and girls in order to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, through health financing, training and retention of the health workforce, increasing knowledge and awareness regarding securing appropriate prenatal and post-natal care, procuring and distributing medicines, vaccines, commodities and equipment, and improving infrastructure, information systems, service delivery and political will in leadership and governance, bearing in mind a need for gender mainstreaming;

15. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to consider the relevant findings and recommendations in the thematic study on preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,[40] and the subsequent compilation of good and

[40] A/HRC/14/39.

efficient practices that exemplify a human rights-based approach to eliminating preventable maternal mortality and morbidity;

16. *Urges* Member States to strengthen measures, including increased and sustainable financial and human resources, as necessary, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5;

17. *Recognizes* the need for intense health and intersectoral efforts with a high level of political commitment, calls upon Member States to accelerate progress in order to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 by addressing reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health in a comprehensive manner, inter alia, through the provision of family planning services, prenatal care, post-natal care, skilled attendants at birth, emergency obstetric and newborn care and methods of preventing and treating sexually transmitted diseases and infections, such as HIV, within strengthened health systems that provide accessible and affordable integrated health-care services and include community-based preventive and clinical care, and urges Member States to use their stewardship and leadership to involve other institutions and sectors in order to strengthen capacity to achieve a greater reduction in preventable maternal mortality in the context of improving the continuum of maternal and child health;

18. *Urges* Member States to engage actively with international organizations and other stakeholders, where needed, in support of national plans to improve nutrition in poor households, including during pregnancy and lactation, and urges Member States, in particular countries with a high burden of maternal and child undernutrition, to consider implementing the Scaling Up Nutrition framework and road map;

19. *Stresses* the critical role of men and boys and the need to share responsibilities between women and men for reducing maternal mortality and morbidity and promoting the health of women and girls, and urges Member States, the United Nations and civil society to include in their development priorities programmes that support the critical role of men in abolishing the practice of early and forced marriage and in supporting women's access to safe conditions for pregnancy and childbirth, contributing to family planning, preventing sexually transmitted infections and HIV, ensuring adequate nutrition for women and girls within their families, including during pregnancy and lactation, and ending violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting;

20. *Encourages* Member States, including donor countries, and the international community to increase their efforts to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity through effective health interventions and health system strengthening, promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls, including in particular the rights to freely consent to marriage, to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the empowerment of women and girls, and to give renewed emphasis to maternal mortality and morbidity initiatives in their development partnerships and cooperation arrangements, by honouring existing commitments and considering new commitments in areas such as humanitarian, emergency and crisis situations and by coordinating to strengthen planning and accountability for greatly accelerated progress on reducing maternal mortality and morbidity;

21. *Encourages* Member States and the international community to take measures to protect women and girls, including indigenous and rural women and girls, those living in poverty and those with disabilities, regardless of their immigration status, from gender-based violence and from early and forced marriage, and to fully implement their obligations under national and international law with respect to preventing violence and investigating and punishing the perpetrators, and also encourages Member States and the international community to provide victims with access to appropriate quality, comprehensive, integrated and accessible health-care services and counselling and to primary and secondary education, and to scale up humanitarian and legal assistance to victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence, including when used as a tactic of war, inter alia, to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity;

22. *Calls upon* those Member States that have made commitments to advance the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health,[41] undertaken by a broad coalition of partners in support of national plans and strategies, to implement their commitments to significantly reduce the number of maternal, newborn and under-age-five deaths, as a matter of immediate concern, including, as appropriate, by scaling up a priority package of high-impact interventions and integrating efforts in such areas as health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, poverty reduction and nutrition, and encourages those States that have not yet done so to consider making such commitments;

23. *Encourages* Member States to consider implementing the recommendations of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health to strengthen information on reproductive, maternal and child health, to track resources for women's and children's health and to strengthen oversight and transparency;

24. *Urges* Member States to elaborate and implement comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that address social, structural and macroeconomic issues in order to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity;

25. *Notes with concern* the high rate of maternal mortality in armed conflict, in post-conflict countries and in natural disaster situations, where girls and women are at particular risk of gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, which places them at risk of serious infections, such as HIV/AIDS, and of pregnancy that may result in miscarriage and other health problems which, in the absence of health care, can be life-threatening;

26. *Encourages* Member States, in particular those with persistently high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity, to maximize the efficient use of existing resources for maternal health, to meet commitments, such as those included in the Abuja Declaration, to reduce poverty, increase budgetary allocations towards sexual and reproductive health, education and development programmes that would eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity, including the prevention and treatment of haemorrhage, obstructed labour, obstetric fistula, infection and reproductive cancer, improve the management of complications arising from abortions and promote the health, including sexual and reproductive health, of women and girls;

[41] Available from www.everywomaneverychild.org.

27. *Urges* Member States, the international community, civil society, including women's and youth organizations, the private sector and other relevant actors to strengthen partnerships and international cooperation to eliminate preventable maternal mortality and morbidity;

28. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, socio-economic status, geographic location and other factors that contribute to maternal mortality and morbidity, and data on other categories needed for monitoring in a timely fashion progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5, as well as to provide appropriate avenues for feedback from women who received health services, and to share such data with the United Nations system for better monitoring of progress towards the achievement of Goal 5 and its targets;

29. *Urges* Member States, in cooperation with the international community and civil society, to improve systems to register pregnancies, births and deaths and to support improved public health infrastructure for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on the burden of maternal morbidity and mortality and its causes at the national and subnational level, including through the use of mobile technologies, where appropriate;

30. *Notes with appreciation* the work done by the United Nations on Millennium Development Goal indicators, in particular those for Millennium Development Goal 5, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue to expand the knowledge base, including the United Nations website, on the progress made towards the achievement of the Goals;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide a report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session, in consultation with Member States, international organizations and all other relevant stakeholders, taking into account relevant United Nations resolutions, on actions to strengthen linkages among programmes, initiatives and activities throughout the United Nations system for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, protection of all of their human rights and elimination of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity.

Resolution 56/4
Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[21] the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[5] and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women,[42]

Reaffirming also that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[17] and the Optional Protocol thereto,[43] as well as other relevant international human rights instruments, provide a framework for the promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous women,

[42] See Economic and Social Council decisions 2005/232 and 2010/232, respectively.
[43] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2131, No. 20378.

Recalling the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,[44] which addresses their individual and collective rights,

Stressing the importance of promoting and pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also through international cooperation in supporting national and regional efforts to achieve the ends of the Declaration, including the right to maintain and strengthen the distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions of indigenous peoples and the right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State,

Recalling its resolution 49/7, entitled "Indigenous women: beyond the ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", which calls upon Governments, intergovernmental agencies, the private sector and civil society to take measures that ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous women in all aspects of society,

Affirming that indigenous women represent a wide variety of cultures and traditions with different needs and concerns and contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures around the world,

Stressing the importance of recognizing the distinct and crucial contribution of indigenous women, their knowledge and their vital roles in diverse local economies to poverty eradication, food security and sustainable development,

Recognizing that a significant number of smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs in developing regions are women, including indigenous women, and that they play a vital role in agricultural and rural development, including by enhancing food security and nutrition for their communities and families,

Recognizing also that the involvement, perspectives and traditional knowledge of indigenous women make an important contribution to sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, such as land, forests, water, seeds and coastal seas,

Expressing deep concern about the increasing feminization of poverty, emphasizing that the empowerment of women, including indigenous women, is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty and that the implementation of special measures aimed at empowering women can help to achieve this objective, and recognizing that poverty of women, including indigenous women, is directly related, inter alia, to the absence of economic opportunities and of autonomy, lack of access to economic resources, lack of access to education and support services, and minimal participation in the decision-making process,

Concerned about the extreme disadvantages that indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women, have typically faced across a range of social and economic indicators and the impediments to their full enjoyment of their rights,

Concerned also that the adverse impacts of climate change on women and girls, including indigenous women, can be exacerbated by gender inequality, discrimination and poverty,

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[44] General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

Concerned further that indigenous women often suffer from multiple forms of discrimination and poverty which increase their vulnerability to all forms of violence,

Emphasizing that indigenous women should exercise their rights free from discrimination of any kind,

Emphasizing also that the United Nations has an important and continuing role to play in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples, and the empowerment of indigenous women and their enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

1. *Urges* States to:

(a) Take particular measures to promote and strengthen policies and programmes for indigenous women with their full participation and respect for their cultural diversity, so that they have the opportunities and the possibility of choice in the development process needed to eradicate the poverty that affects them;

(b) Support the economic activities of indigenous women, in consultation with them and taking into account their traditional knowledge, so as to improve their situation and development, in particular by enhancing their equal access to productive resources and agricultural inputs, such as land, seeds, financial services, technology, transportation and information;

(c) Ensure the realization of the right of indigenous women and girls to education, and promote a multicultural approach to education that is responsive to the needs, aspirations and cultures of indigenous women, including by developing appropriate education programmes, curricula and teaching aids, to the extent possible in the languages of indigenous peoples, by promoting their access to information and communications technologies and by providing for the participation of indigenous women in these processes, and take measures to ensure that indigenous women and girls have the right to equal access to all levels and forms of education without discrimination;

(d) Provide support, investment and technical assistance for the training of indigenous women, and support women's organizations and cooperatives, which contribute to promoting mutual support and leadership;

(e) Formulate and implement, in consultation and collaboration with indigenous women and their organizations, policies and programmes designed to promote capacity-building processes and strengthen their leadership, and take measures to ensure full and effective participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, and eliminate barriers for their participation in political, economic, social and cultural life;

(f) Take concrete measures to provide and enhance equal access and enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health for indigenous women, including sexual and reproductive health, and access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation, and safe cooking and heating;

(g) Respect, preserve and promote, where appropriate, the traditional knowledge of indigenous women with respect to medicine, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals;

(h) Comply with and effectively implement all their human rights obligations so as to ensure the full realization and equal enjoyment of the rights of indigenous women;

(i) Take concrete measures to provide equal access to justice for indigenous women at all levels, and ensure that indigenous women have equal rights to own land and other property;

(j) Recognize that poverty and discrimination increase the conditions that generate violence against women, and take actions at the national, local and community levels to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against indigenous women;

(k) Collect and disseminate disaggregated data on indigenous women, including those living in rural areas, in order to monitor and improve the impact of development policies and programmes for their well-being;

2. *Encourages* States to support the participation of indigenous women in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also called Rio+20, and in the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly that is to be called the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held in 2014;

3. *Encourages* States, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society to take appropriate measures to promote the rights of indigenous peoples, and respect their cultures, lands, territories and resources and their contribution to sustainable development;

4. *Encourages* the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and, as appropriate, relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors to take measures to develop, finance, implement and support policies and programmes aimed at promoting the empowerment of indigenous women and their enjoyment of all human rights.

Resolution 56/5
Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[21] the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[5] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[26] the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS,[45] the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS[46] and the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS[47] and the HIV and AIDS-related goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[28] and the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the resolve of Member States to have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse the spread of HIV,

Recalling all previous resolutions on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS,

[45] General Assembly resolution 60/262, annex.
[46] General Assembly resolution 65/277, annex.
[47] General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 66/140 entitled "The girl child", as well as the agreed conclusions of the forty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women entitled "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)",[48]

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[49]

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session on the situation of women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS, with an emphasis on accelerated actions taken in regard to women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS, in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[21] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[26] the 2006 and 2011 Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS[45] and the 2011 Commitments on HIV/AIDS,[46] using information provided by Member States and the United Nations system.

Decision 56/101
Documents considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-sixth session

5. At its 18th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to take note of the following documents:

Under agenda item 2

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women[50]

Under agenda item 3

(a) Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women;

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges;[51]

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions;[52]

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts;[53]

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[48] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2001/27 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A.

[49] See E/CN.6/2012/11.

[50] E/CN.6/2012/13.

[51] E/CN.6/2012/3.

[52] E/CN.6/2012/4.

[53] E/CN.6/2012/7.

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on actions to strengthen linkages among programmes, initiatives and activities throughout the United Nations system for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, protection of all of their human rights and elimination of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity;[54]

(f) Report of the Secretary-General on the economic empowerment of women;[55]

(g) Report of the Secretary-General on the joint workplan of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.[56]

[54] E/CN.6/2012/9.
[55] E/CN.6/2012/10.
[56] A/HRC/19/31-E/CN.6/2012/12.

Chapter II

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 2nd to 14th meetings, from 27 February to 6 March 2012; on its 16th to 18th meetings, on 8 and 9 March 2012; and on its 19th meeting, on 15 March 2012. It held a general discussion at its 2nd, 5th and 6th, 10th to 12th, and 13th meetings. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the normative aspects of its work (E/CN.6/2012/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges (E/CN.6/2012/3);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions (E/CN.6/2012/4);

(d) Note by the Secretariat transmitting a discussion guide for the high-level round table on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges (E/CN.6/2012/5);

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2012/6);

(f) Report of the Secretary-General on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts (E/CN.6/2012/7);

(g) Report of the Secretary-General on ending female genital mutilation (E/CN.6/2012/8);

(h) Report of the Secretary-General on actions to strengthen linkages among programmes, initiatives and activities throughout the United Nations system for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, protection of all of their human rights and elimination of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity (E/CN.6/2012/9);

(i) Report of the Secretary-General on the economic empowerment of women (E/CN.6/2012/10);

(j) Report of the Secretary-General on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2012/11);

(k) Report of the Secretary-General on the joint workplan of the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/19/31-E/CN.6/2012/12);

(l) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (A/HRC/19/30-E/CN.6/2012/13);

(m) Note by the Secretariat transmitting the results of the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.1);

(n) Statements submitted by non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.6/2012/NGO/1-74).

2. At the 2nd meeting, on 27 February, opening addresses were made by the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. At the same meeting, introductory statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and by the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

4. Also at the same meeting, the Commission heard statements by the keynote speakers, Ms. Anne Tutwiler, Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Ms. Elisabeth Atangana, President of the Plateforme régionale des organizations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale.

5. Also at the 2nd meeting, statements were made by the representative of Algeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Tunisia (on behalf of the African States), Denmark (on behalf of the European Union and associated countries), Chile (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States), Argentina (on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South), Samoa (on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum), and Angola (on behalf of the Southern African Development Community).

6. At the 2nd meeting, statements were also made by the observers for the Gambia, Swaziland and France.

7. At the same meeting, on the proposal of the Chair, the Commission agreed to transmit the Chair's summary of the discussion of the high-level round table (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.3)[1] and the moderators' summaries of the panel discussions on the priority theme (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.4 and E/CN.6/2012/CRP.5)[1] to the Council as input for its annual ministerial review in 2012.

8. At the 5th meeting, on 28 February, statements were made by the representatives of Jamaica (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), China, Italy, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Liberia, the Republic of Korea, the Dominican Republic and Zimbabwe.

9. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for Nigeria, Austria, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Brazil, Guyana, South Africa, Mexico, Samoa, Tunisia, Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania, Fiji, the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Honduras, Portugal, Indonesia, Morocco and Ethiopia.

[1] See chap. VII, para. 11.

10. At the 6th meeting, on 29 February, statements were made by the representatives of Guinea, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Argentina, Georgia, Germany, Sweden, India, the United States and Senegal.

11. At the same meeting, statements were made by the observers for Canada, the Congo, Kenya, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Togo, Sierra Leone, Panama, Tuvalu, Mozambique, Cameroon, Peru, Ireland, Turkey, Pakistan, Australia, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Finland and Uganda.

12. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the observer for Palestine.

13. Also at the 6th meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the International Alliance of Women and the Chair of the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on the Status of Women.

14. At the 10th meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the representatives of Spain, Uruguay, Thailand, Malaysia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, El Salvador, Japan, Estonia, Israel, Cuba, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

15. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for Mali, Angola, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana, Lithuania, the Seychelles, Switzerland, Vanuatu, Slovenia, Guinea-Bissau, the Czech Republic, Tonga, New Zealand, Poland, Chile, Greece and Suriname.

16. At the 11th meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the representatives of Belgium, the Russian Federation and Eritrea.

17. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for Afghanistan, Namibia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Barbados, Paraguay, Malta, Liechtenstein, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Solomon Islands.

18. At the 12th meeting, on 5 March, statements were made by the representatives of Iraq, Rwanda and Comoros.

19. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, the Syrian Arab Republic, Libya, Nepal, Bahamas, Costa Rica, Burundi, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

20. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the observer for the Holy See.

21. Also at the 12th meeting, the Chair of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice reported to the Commission on the activities of the Working Group.

22. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for the following intergovernmental organizations: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Organization of American States, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Inter-Parliamentary Union, International Organization for Migration, League of Arab States and African Union.

23. Also at the 12th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United

Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

24. At the same meeting, a coalition of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council, represented by the African Women's Regional Organizations, made a statement.

25. Also at the 12th meeting, the representative of Israel made a statement in exercise of the right of reply.

26. At the 13th meeting, on 5 March, a statement was made by the representative of Haiti.

27. At the same meeting, the representatives of the following non-governmental organizations made statements: Association of African Women for Research and Development, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Asia Pacific Women's Watch/Asia Pacific Regional Caucus, International Council for Women, International Trade Union Confederation, Non-Governmental Organizations Coordinating Committee, RESO-Femmes, Women's Consortium of Nigeria and a coalition of non-governmental organizations in consultative status represented by Young Women's Caucus, European and North American Caucus, and Working Group on Girls.

28. At the 19th meeting, on 15 March, a statement was made by the Chair of the Commission, Marjon Kamara (Liberia), regarding the negotiations on the draft agreed conclusions on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges, which concluded without agreement on the text.

29. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Jamaica (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), the Islamic Republic of Iran, Zimbabwe (on behalf of the Group of African States), the United States, Cuba, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation and Japan, and by the observers for Denmark (on behalf of the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Peru, Pakistan, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Mexico, Canada, Turkey and Australia.

30. Also at the 19th meeting, since no agreed conclusions on the priority theme were adopted, the Commission agreed that the Chair's summary of the discussion on the agreed conclusions would be prepared and referenced in the report of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission and posted on its website.[1]

Implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges

1. High-level round table

31. At its 3rd meeting, on 27 February, the Commission held a high-level round table in two parallel meetings on the priority theme "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges".

High-level round table A

32. High-level round table A was chaired by the Chair of the Commission, who made an opening statement.

33. The following delegations participated in the interactive dialogue: Brazil, Norway, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Mexico, Egypt, South Africa, Cuba, China, Mozambique, Cameroon, Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Congo, Ukraine, Georgia, Switzerland, Zambia, India, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Islamic Republic of Iran, United States and Dominican Republic.

34. The observer for the European Union also made a statement.

35. The Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Sheila Sisulu, responded to questions and made concluding remarks.

High-level round table B

36. The Commission held a high-level round table chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Commission, Carlos Enriquez García González (El Salvador).

37. The following delegations participated in the interactive dialogue: Tunisia, Bangladesh, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Nicaragua, Finland, Swaziland, Kenya, Italy, Pakistan, Niger, United Republic of Tanzania, Guatemala, Sudan, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, Japan, Australia, Turkey, Malaysia, New Zealand, Colombia, Uruguay and El Salvador.

38. The Assistant Secretary-General for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships and Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Lakshmi Puri, made concluding remarks.

2. Panel discussions

Key policy initiatives and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming: the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: focus on economic empowerment of women

39. At its 4th meeting, on 28 February, the Commission held an expert panel discussion on the priority theme "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: focus on economic empowerment of rural women", moderated by the Vice-Chair, Ana Marie Hernando (Philippines).

40. Presentations were made by Ms. Malika Abdelali-Martini, socio-economist and gender research specialist, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, Syrian Arab Republic; Ms. Shanaz Wazir Ali, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Social Sectors; Ms. Anna Kaisa Karttunen, agriculture and rural development specialist, Finland; Dr. Jemimah Njuki, Poverty, Gender and Impact Programme, International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya; and Ms. Cheryl Morden, Director, North American Liaison Office, International Fund for Agricultural Development.

41. The Commission then held an interactive dialogue with the panellists, in which the following delegations participated: Italy, Pakistan, Israel, Portugal, Panama, Switzerland, India, Republic of Korea, Zimbabwe, Islamic Republic of Iran,

Sweden, South Africa, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Swaziland, Jordan, Brazil, United States, Gambia, Mozambique, Canada, Nicaragua, Philippines and Sudan.

42. The observer for the European Union also made a statement.

43. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated in the dialogue: Mujer para la Mujer (also on behalf of Vida y Familia de Guadalajara and Misión Mujer), Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women, Voices of African Mother and Public Services International (also on behalf of Education International and International Trade Union Confederation).

Key policy initiatives and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming: the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: focus on the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions for the empowerment of rural women

44. At its 7th meeting, on 29 February, the Commission held an expert panel discussion on the priority theme "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges: focus on the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions for the empowerment of rural women", moderated by the Vice-Chair, Filippo Cinti (Italy).

45. Presentations were made by Ms. Bintou Nimaga, Technical Adviser, Ministry of Women Affairs, Children and the Family, Mali; Mr. Andrés Teodoro Wehrle Rivarola, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Paraguay; Ms. Lilly Be'Soer, Founder, Voice for Change in Papua New Guinea; and Mr. Victor Lutenco, Adviser, Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Moldova.

46. The Commission then held an interactive dialogue with the panellists, in which the representatives of the following delegations participated: Republic of Korea, Swaziland, Italy, Israel, Russian Federation, Philippines, Gambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, United States and Japan. The observers for Jordan, South Africa, Pakistan, Finland, Togo, Nigeria, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand and Brazil also participated

47. The observers for Palestine and the European Union also participated.

48. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated: Forum for Women and Development, Soroptomist International, Women's Consortium of Nigeria; Japan Federation of Bar Associations, Tchad Agir pour l'environnement, Education International and Mujer para la Mujer.

Progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the fifty-second session of the Commission: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women: focus on national experiences[2]

49. At its 8th meeting, on 1 March, the Commission held a panel discussion on the review theme "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women: focus on national experiences", moderated by the Vice-Chair, Carlos Enrique García González (El Salvador).

[2] See the Moderator's summary of the panel discussion (E/CN.6/2012/CRP.7), available from the website of the Commission.

50. Presentations were made by Mr. Mohamed Chafiki, Director, Studies and Financial Forecasts, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco; Ms. María Dolores Almeida, Vice-Minister of Finance, Ecuador; Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister for Women's Affairs and Chair of the Cambodian National Council for Women; and Mr. Gerhard Steger, Director General for Budget and Public Finances, Federal Ministry of Finance, Austria.

51. The Commission held a dialogue with the panellists, in which the representatives of the following participated: Dominican Republic, Islamic Republic of Iran, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, China, Israel, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Italy, El Salvador and United States. Observers for the following also participated: Norway (on behalf of Nordic countries), South Africa, Morocco, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Switzerland, Jordan, Paraguay, Indonesia, Canada, Portugal, Panama, Nigeria, Kenya, the Congo and Mexico.

52. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated: Education International, Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer, Interregional Union of Life Help for Mentally Handicapped Persons "Sail of Hope", and Mujer para la Mujer.

Progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the fifty-second session of the Commission: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women: focus on the perspective of international organizations and multilateral development partners[3]

53. At its 9th meeting, on 1 March, the Commission held an expert panel discussion on the review theme on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women: focus on the perspective of international organizations and multilateral development partners", moderated by the Vice-Chair, Irina Velichko (Belarus).

54. Presentations were made by Ms. Lydia Alpizar, Executive Director, Association for Women's Rights in Development; Ms. Jeni Klugman, Director, Gender and Development, World Bank; Ms. Patti O'Neill, Deputy Head, Development Cooperation Directorate's Policy Division, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Ms. Saraswathi Menon, Director, Policy Division, UN-Women; and Ms. Liane Schalatek, Associate Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation North America.

55. The Commission then engaged in an interactive dialogue with the representatives of Israel and the Philippines. The observers for Iceland (on behalf of the Nordic countries), South Africa, Switzerland, Morocco, Canada, Pakistan, Uganda, Kenya, Australia, Solomon Islands and Mexico also participated.

56. The observer for the European Union also participated.

57. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated: International Trade Union Confederation (also on behalf of Education International and Public Services International), Rural Development Leadership

[3] See E/CN.6/2012/CRP.6 for the Moderator's summary of the panel discussion, available from the website of the Commission.

Network, International Administrative Science Association, Human Rights Advocates, Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries.

Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men: engaging young women and men, girls and boys, to advance gender equality[4]

58. At its 14th meeting, on 6 March, the Commission held a panel discussion on the theme "Engaging young women and men, and girls and boys, to advance gender equality", moderated by the Vice-Chair, Filippo Cinti (Italy).

59. Presentations were made by Ms. Edna Akullq, founder, Self Help Foundation Uganda; Mr. Roberto Cárcamo Tapia, member, Colectivo de Jóvenes por la Igualdad de Género; Mr. Shishir Chandra, member, Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women in India; and Ms. Rozaina Adam, Member of Parliament, Maldives.

60. The Commission then held an interactive dialogue with the panellists, in which the following delegations participated: South Africa, Italy, Pakistan, Cameroon, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Israel, Switzerland, Paraguay, Germany, Malaysia, Cuba, Gambia, Finland, Denmark, Canada, the United States, El Salvador, New Zealand, Japan, the Sudan, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Thailand, Jordan and Turkey.

61. The observers for the European Union and for the following intergovernmental organizations also participated: League of Arab States and International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions.

62. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated: World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, Girl Scouts of the United States of the America (also on behalf of the American Association of University of Women, Girls Learn International, The Grail, Loretto Community and Passionists International), Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, IFENDU for Women's Development, World Youth Alliance, Japan Federation of Bar Associations and International Psychoanalytical Association Trust.

Action taken by the Commission

Ending female genital mutilation

63. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the representative of Zimbabwe, on behalf of the Group of African States, introduced a draft decision entitled "Ending female genital mutilation" (E/CN.6/2012/L.1).

64. At the 17th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission was informed that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

65. At the same meeting, Andorra, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the Niger, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Serbia,

[4] For the Moderator's summary, see E/CN.6/2012/CRP.8, available from the website of the Commission.

Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America joined in sponsoring the draft decision.

66. Also at the 17th meeting, the Commission adopted the draft decision (see chap. I, sect. A).

Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

67. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the observers for Algeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Palestine, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women" (E/CN.6/2012/L.2).

68. At its 17th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

69. At the same meeting, Brazil and Turkey joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

70. Also at the same meeting, following a statement by the representative of Israel, the Commission adopted the draft resolution by a recorded vote of 29 to 2, with 10 abstentions (see chap. I, sect. B). The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Guinea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Thailand, Uruguay, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Belgium, Colombia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden.

71. Statements were made before the vote by the representatives of Italy (on behalf of the European Union and associated countries) and the United States.

72. Statements were made after the vote by the representative of Japan and the observers for Algeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Palestine.

Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflict

73. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the observer for Azerbaijan, on behalf of Belarus, Georgia and Turkey introduced a draft resolution entitled "Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflict" (E/CN.6/2012/L.3). Subsequently, Armenia and Jordan joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

74. At its 17th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

75. At the same meeting, Argentina, Brazil, Guinea and India joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

76. Also at the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 56/1).

Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters

77. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the representative of Japan introduced the draft resolution entitled "Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters" (E/CN.6/2012/L.4).

78. At the same meeting, the representative of Japan announced that the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Subsequently, Jordan and Switzerland joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

79. At the 18th meeting, on 9 March, the representative of Japan made a statement, orally revised the draft resolution, circulated the text in an informal paper and announced that Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Mongolia, Panama, Poland, Romania and South Africa had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

80. At the same meeting, the Commission was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

81. Also at the same meeting, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Jamaica, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as orally revised.

82. Also at the 18th meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 56/2).

83. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the observer for Norway (also on behalf of Iceland and New Zealand).

Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women

84. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the representative of the United States introduced a draft resolution entitled "Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women" (E/CN.6/2012/L.5) and announced that Australia, Benin, Guatemala, Israel, the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey had joined in sponsoring the text.

85. At the same meeting, Armenia, Guinea and Panama joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

86. At its 17th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

87. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States made a statement, orally revised the text and announced that Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Honduras, Iceland, India, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Rwanda, Switzerland and Uruguay had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

88. Also at the same meeting, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, as orally revised.

89. Also at the 18th meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, as orally revised (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 56/3).

90. A statement was made before the vote by the observer for Jordan.

91. Statements were made after the vote by the representatives of Cuba, Mauritania (on behalf of the Group of Arab States), the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, and by the observers for Malta, Mali and Poland.

92. The observer for the Holy See also made a statement.

Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication

93. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the representative of El Salvador introduced a draft resolution entitled "Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication" (E/CN.6/2012/L.6), on behalf of Australia, Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua, and announced that Chile, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Subsequently, Panama joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

94. At its 17th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

95. At the same meeting, the representative of El Salvador made a statement and announced that Austria, Brazil, Cuba, Honduras, Spain and Uruguay had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Subsequently, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, Germany, Guinea, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, New Zealand, Romania and Slovenia joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

96. Also at the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 56/4).

97. Statements were made after the vote by the representatives of the United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Spain, as well as by the observers for Algeria (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China) and Palestine.

Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS

98. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the observer for Botswana, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, introduced the draft resolution entitled "Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS" (E/CN.6/2012/L.7).

99. At the same meeting, Cameroon, Guinea, the Philippines and Thailand joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

100. At the 18th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission was informed that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

101. At the same meeting, the representative of Angola made a statement (on behalf of the Southern African Development Community), withdrew the draft resolution, introduced, read out and circulated a new draft proposal, in English only, entitled "Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS", and announced that Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Rwanda and Thailand had joined in sponsoring the new draft proposal.

102. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the United States.

103. Also at the 18th meeting, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Guinea, Grenada, Haiti, India, Jamaica and Senegal joined in sponsoring the new draft proposal.

104. At the 18th meeting, on 9 March, the Commission adopted the draft resolution, in English only (see chap. I, sect. D, resolution 56/5).

105. Statements were made after the vote by the representatives of Italy (on behalf of the European Union), the Islamic Republic of Iran and by the observers for Australia and Chile.

Chapter III
Communications concerning the status of women

1. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at its 15th (closed) meeting, on 7 March 2012. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women (see para. 3 below);[1]

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the list of confidential communications concerning the status of women (E/CN.6/2012/SW/COMM.LIST/46/R and Add.1).

Action taken by the Commission

Report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women

2. At its 15th meeting (closed), on 7 March, the Commission considered the report of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women.

3. At the same meeting (closed), the Commission decided to take note of the report of the Working Group and to incorporate it in the report of its fifty-sixth session. The report of the Working Group read as follows:

> 1. The Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women met in closed meetings before the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2002/235 and was guided in its deliberations by the mandate given to it by the Council in its resolution 76 (V), as amended by the Council in its resolutions 304 I (XI), 1983/27, 1992/19, 1993/11 and 2009/16.
>
> 2. The Working Group considered the list of confidential communications and replies by Governments (E/CN.6/2012/SW/COMM.LIST/46/R and Add.1). There was no list of non-confidential communications concerning the status of women since no such communications had been received by the Secretary-General.
>
> 3. The Working Group considered the 48 confidential communications, comprising 86 cases addressed to 61 States, received directly by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The Working Group noted that no confidential communications concerning the status of women had been received from other United Nations bodies or the specialized agencies.
>
> 4. The Working Group noted that there were 40 replies from 29 Governments.[2]

[1] The report was circulated internally under document symbol E/CN.6/2012/ CRP.2.

[2] Thirty-nine of the replies concern the 2012 list of confidential communications (E/CN.6/2012/SW/COMM.LIST/46/R) and one of the replies concerns the 2012 list of confidential communications (E/CN.6/2011/SW/COMM.LIST/45/R).

5. The Working Group recalled its mandate as defined in paragraph 4 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27, which stated that the Working Group should perform the following functions:

(a) Consideration of all communications, including the replies of Governments thereon, if any, with a view to bringing to the attention of the Commission those communications, including the replies of Governments, which appeared to reveal a consistent pattern of reliably attested injustice and discriminatory practices against women;

(b) Preparation of a report, based on its analysis of the confidential and non-confidential communications, which would indicate the categories in which communications were most frequently submitted to the Commission.

6. The Working Group noted that a number of communications of a general nature had been submitted as well as communications alleging specific cases of discrimination against individual women and girls.

7. The Working Group discerned the following categories in which communications had most frequently been submitted to the Commission:

(a) Sexual violence against women and girls, including rape, forced prostitution, threats of rape, and sexual harassment, including in the workplace, committed by private individuals, including armed individuals, and military, security and law enforcement personnel, including in detention and detention-related situations, as well as failure by States, resulting in a climate of impunity, to exercise due diligence to prevent such violations, and to adequately and in a timely manner investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators, failure by States to provide adequate protection, support and reparation for victims and their families, and failure by States to ensure access to justice;

(b) Other forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, forced and early marriage and female genital mutilation, as well as failure by States, resulting in a climate of impunity, to exercise due diligence to prevent such violations and to adequately and in a timely manner investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators, failure by States to provide adequate protection, support and reparation for victims and their families, and failure by States to ensure access to justice;

(c) Trafficking in women and children, for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, as well as failure by States, resulting in a climate of impunity, to adopt adequate legislation prohibiting trafficking in persons, and to exercise due diligence to prevent such violations and to adequately and in a timely manner investigate, prosecute and punish all perpetrators;

(d) Abuse of power by military, security and law enforcement personnel, humiliation, lack of due process and delays in proceedings, arbitrary arrest and detention, failure to grant a fair trial and impunity resulting from failure by States to promptly investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators;

(e) Threats and pressure on victims of violence, their families and witnesses by private individuals and law enforcement officials, often preventing them from filing complaints or leading them to withdraw their complaints;

(f) Inhuman treatment, including torture, in detention and penitentiary systems, and inadequate conditions of imprisonment for women, including failure to provide women inmates with access to basic medical care and adequate hygiene standards;

(g) Serious and systematic violations of the human rights of women and girls, some of which target specific groups, such as women with disabilities, widows, women belonging to minorities, and indigenous women, including harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, rape, torture and child abduction, as well as failure by States, resulting in a climate of impunity, to exercise due diligence to prevent such violations and to adequately and in a timely manner investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators, failure by States to provide adequate protection, support and reparation for victims and their families, and failure by States to ensure access to justice;

(h) Intimidation, harassment and detention of women human rights defenders and their families, and disproportionate penalties and restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression of women human rights defenders when reporting on women's rights violations, as a means of exerting pressure on them to stop their human rights work, as well as failure by States to exercise due diligence to prevent such violations, and to investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators, failure by States to provide adequate protection to women human rights defenders, and failure by States to ensure access to justice;

(i) Violations of the right to health, including sexual and reproductive health, of women and girls, restricted access to services, including gynaecological and obstetric services, and discrimination on the basis of HIV-positive status;

(j) Discrimination resulting from stereotypical practices and attitudes towards women, including in the areas of education, employment, personal status, marriage and divorce;

(k) Absence of adequate legislation to address and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women;

(l) Ineffective implementation and/or enforcement of laws aimed at promoting and protecting women's human rights;

(m) Impact of legislation and/or stereotypical practices that discriminate against women in the areas of:

(i) Civil and political rights, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of movement, and participation in decision-making processes and in public life on an equal basis with men;

(ii) Nationality, personal status, marriage and divorce;

(iii) The right to own and inherit property;

(iv) Employment and retirement;

(v) Education, including access to education;

(vi) Economic opportunities;

(vii) Access to justice.

8. During its consideration of all communications, including the replies of Governments thereon, and consideration of the question whether any of these appeared to reveal a consistent pattern of reliably attested injustice and discriminatory practices against women, the Working Group expressed its concern about:

(a) Violence against women and girls, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture, killings and domestic violence, as well as harassment, mistreatment and detention of women human rights defenders and their families;

(b) Forced and early marriage and female genital mutilation, and their adverse effects on the full enjoyment by women and girls of their fundamental rights, including the right to health;

(c) Violations of the right of women to health, including sexual and reproductive health, and discrimination against specific groups of women in access to health care;

(d) Trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and the lack of progress in tackling such phenomenon;

(e) The persisting climate of impunity and abuse of power, including in many cases where violence against women, including sexual violence, is perpetrated or condoned by law enforcement personnel;

(f) The failure by States, in contravention of their human rights obligations, to exercise due diligence to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls and adequately investigate and prosecute such crimes, punish perpetrators and provide compensation, protection and assistance to victims and their families;

(g) The persistence of gender stereotypes;

(h) The continued existence of legislation or practices in many areas that discriminate against women, or have the effect of discriminating against women, despite States' international obligations and commitments and constitutional provisions to outlaw such discrimination;

(i) Discrimination and violence against specific groups of women and girls, such as widows, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women belonging to minorities, and women living with HIV.

9. The Working Group appreciated the cooperation by Governments that had submitted replies or clarifying observations to the communications received, and it encouraged all others to make such submissions in the future. The Working Group considered such cooperation essential for it to discharge its duties effectively, noting in this regard the importance of receiving replies from Governments. From the replies received, the Working Group was encouraged to note that some Governments had carried out investigations into the allegations made and taken measures, including enacting new legislation, conducting legal reform, introducing policies and services, such as health-related services, to better protect and assist women, including women victims of violence, developing national plans of action, prosecuting and punishing

perpetrators of violence, introducing targeted measures for the promotion of women's rights, making efforts to guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights by women and improving public awareness-raising activities and training to promote gender equality and the advancement of women in accordance with relevant international standards.

Chapter IV

Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

1. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 16th meeting on 8 March 2012.

2. At the 16th meeting, on 8 March, the Chair, Marjon V. Kamara (Liberia), drew the attention of the Commission to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council contained in document E/CN.6/2012/14.

3. At the same meeting, the Commission heard a statement by the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2011/266, wherein the Council requested that the results of the international expert group meeting on the theme "Combating violence against indigenous women and girls: article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" be reported to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session.

Chapter V

Provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 18th meeting, on 9 March 2012. It had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission (E/CN.6/2012/L.9).

2. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the draft provisional agenda for its fifty-seventh session and recommended its adoption by the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, sect. C).

Chapter VI

Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session

1. At the 19th meeting, on 15 March 2012, the Vice-Chair and Rapporteur, Filippo Cinti (Italy), introduced the draft report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session, as contained in document E/CN.6/2012/L.8.

2. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the draft report on its fifty-sixth session and entrusted the Rapporteur with its completion.

Chapter VII
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on the Status of Women held its fifty-sixth session at United Nations Headquarters on 14 March 2011 and from 27 February to 9 March and on 15 March 2012. The Commission held 19 meetings (1st to 19th).

2. The session was opened by the Chair, Marjon V. Kamara (Liberia), who also made a statement.

3. At the 2nd meeting, on 27 February 2012, statements were made by the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

4. At the same meeting, statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and by the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

5. Also at the same meeting, two keynote speakers, Anne Tutwiler, Deputy Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Elisabeth Atangana, President of the Plateforme régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique centrale, addressed the Commission.

B. Attendance

6. The session was attended by representatives of 45 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. The list of participants is contained in document E/CN.6/2012/INF/1.

C. Election of officers

7. In accordance with paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/21, the officers are elected to the Bureau of the Commission for a term of office of two years. The following officers were elected at the 1st and 2nd meetings of the fifty-sixth session, on 14 March 2011 and 27 February 2012, to serve on the Bureau of the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions:

Chair:
Marjon Kamara (Liberia)

Vice-Chairs:
Irina Velichko (Belarus)
Carlos Enrique García González (El Salvador)
[illegible]na Marie Hernando (Philippines)

Vice-Chair and Rapporteur:
Filippo Cinti (Italy)

D. Agenda and organization of work

8. At its 2nd meeting, on 27 February, the Commission adopted its agenda as contained in document E/CN.6/2012/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century":
   (a) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives:
      (i) Priority theme: the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges;
      (ii) Review theme: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women;
   (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men: engaging young women and men, and girls and boys, to advance gender equality;
   (c) Gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters.
4. Communications concerning the status of women.
5. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.
6. Provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission.
7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session.

9. Also at the 2nd meeting, the Commission approved its organization of work, as contained in document E/CN.6/2012/1/Add.1.

E. Appointment of the members of a working group on communications on the status of women

10. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27, the Commission established a working group to consider communications concerning the status of women. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/16, the following five members, nominated by their regional groups, were appointed to the working group of the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions:

Ms. Li Xiaomei (China)
Ms. Fatima Alfeine (Comoros)
Mr. Ruben Armando Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador)
Ms. Noa Furman (Israel)
Mr. Grigory Lukiyantsev (Russian Federation)

F. Documentation

11. The list of documents before the Commission at its fifty-sixth session is available on the following website: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/documentation.htm.

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